

COGNITIVE LINGUISTIC STUDIES IN CULTURAL CONTEXTS **2**

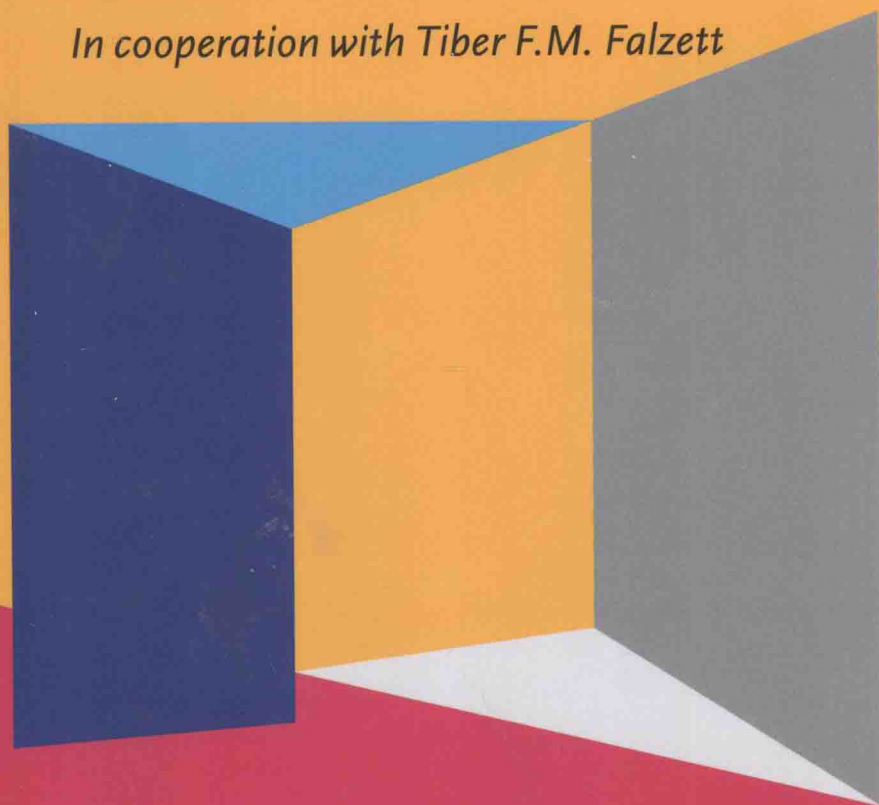
# Endangered Metaphors

EDITED BY

Anna Idström

Elisabeth Piirainen

*In cooperation with Tiber F.M. Falzett*



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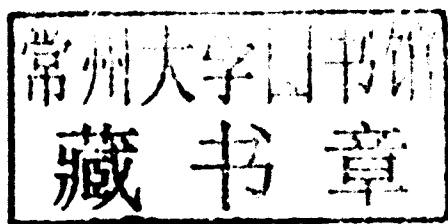
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# Prologue

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## 1. Background to metaphor studies

Metaphor studies have shifted from the periphery of linguistics and cognate disciplines to their core, thanks to a significant degree to Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) seminal monograph on the metaphors WE (mainly English-speaking Westerners) live by. Their arguments are directly responsible for an exploratory paper (Mühlhäusler 1995), in which I put forward a number of propositions regarding the metaphors OTHERS live by, including the following ones:

1. In the absence of immaculate perception, human beings interpret the world through culture specific metaphors – particularly those aspects of the world that are not fully known to them. Most advances in the sciences are a consequence of the adoption of new metaphorical interpretations. These typically have to do with what we regard as natural. As observed by Kuhn (1979): “The essence of any scientific revolution is the redrawing of the boundary between what is regarded as natural and what is not”.
2. There is no culture-neutral boundary between what is literal and what is metaphorical. Thus, what is literal from the point of view of English speakers may well be metaphorical from the perspective of another language.
3. Far from distracting scholars in their search for truth, metaphors have very considerable heuristic value. However, metaphors can also be misused and exploited as rhetorical devices. Lakoff and Johnson, for instance, argue that “a metaphor in a political or economic system, by virtue of what it hides, can lead to human degradation” (1980: 236).
4. The metaphorical schemes of English are shared or at least largely overlap with those of most Standard Average European (SAE) languages, but are often absent or different in so-called ‘exotic’ languages.
5. By studying the metaphorical systems of other cultures and by feeding the results of such studies back into our own culture, we might be able to solve certain social, technological, environmental and philosophical problems. Like developing lateral-thinking skills (De Bono 1971) it is a method of generating alternative ways of looking at things.

6. There has been a massive and ever increasing reduction in linguistic diversity in the wake of Western colonization and modernization both of the Neo-Europe (Australia, New Zealand, USA, Canada, South America) and the Third World. Non-European semantic systems (including metaphor systems) are particularly vulnerable to the modernization process. The number of genuinely different semantic systems is rapidly shrinking.
7. Whatever one's view may be on intertranslatability, linguistic universals and linguistic relativisms, time empirically to test these matters is running out. The documentation and study of non-Western semantic systems hence must be one of the urgent priorities of linguistics, as indeed it is for anthropology, as emphasized in Keesing (1985: 214).

## 2. How to describe metaphors

It is good to see that so many scholars have begun seriously to look at the metaphors not just of non-Western cultures but also at those of non-mainstream peoples in the Western World. I am aware that not everyone agrees with my propositions. In particular, claim No 2 in the above list evoked the ire of one of the readers of my article, who subsequently wrote a critical paper on it (Goddard 1996). His main objection was to an "undercurrent of extreme relativism" (p. 145) and he argues that 'despite the enormous semantic differences between languages, there is solid evidence that they share a small set of "universal meanings", which can provide a non-arbitrary and non-ethnocentric vocabulary for cross-linguistic semantics'. In a rejoinder (Mühlhäusler 1996) I adduced a number of additional arguments in support of my original propositions. In addition, there are others, for instance that sharing some meanings and conceptualizations does of course not mean that all meanings are shared. Languages are more appropriately regarded as a mix of universal and singular properties than mere spelling variants of a set of universal principles. Whilst there is more glory in establishing universal principles and generalizations there is a clear place in linguistic studies for butterfly collecting and classification and there is room for documenting singular properties of human languages. An important question is how we can talk about such properties.

It seems as desirable to have a set of universal descriptive features but this may not be achievable on principled grounds. Any examination of the metalinguistic theories and practices of linguists will suggest that we are far from having agreed operational descriptors even in the domain of 'core' grammar, i.e. phonetology or morphosyntax. There is no agreement as to what constitutes a 'geminate', 'fortis', 'clitic' or 'object', not to mention concepts such as 'anterior' or 'aorist'. The problem is compounded by the belief that such descriptive apparatus can be applied to decontextualized words and utterances.

The development of a neutral metalinguistics would seem to be unachievable unless one believes that there are entities out there that can be simply labeled and unless one fudges the difference between metalanguage and language described as well as the distinction between metasprachlich and metalinguistisch made by German linguists. Using the term 'grammar' with systematic ambiguity as was first done by Chomsky (1965) will not do. Chomsky's deliberate confusion is being handed down to new generations of linguists by means of introductory textbooks such as Fromkin (et al. 6th edition 2009) and perpetuated in Goddard's paper together with the equally problematic view that a language consists of combinations of a determinate set of small units. His is one of the numerous attempts by philosophers and linguists to systematize knowledge and to represent it by means of a small number of recurrent elements, developed out of the enlightenment ideas exposed in several contributions to Diderot's *Encyclopédie* and repeated again and again in the *a priori* language proposals of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century universalists. To me the fact that such universals are attested in the description of language produced by professional Western linguists is not the same as saying that they are attested in languages. Taking machines to bits or talking the world to bits are metaphorically related, though this might turn out to be difficult to explain semantic universalists.

Unexpectedly, there is also little agreement on what constitutes a metaphor and how it can be defined and distinguished from both literal expressions and other tropes. Not all contributors to this volume agree on their definition of 'metaphor', but just as creolists can do creolistics in the absence of an agreed meaning of 'creole', metaphor studies are possible without an agreed definition. Happily, meaningful communication does not require a fixed grammatical code with a fixed finite set of agreed meanings and metaphors can be employed to enable communication between interlocutors with different knowledge bases.

As regards the analysis of metaphors, it is important to remember that they are not simply objects out there, but ways of using language in cultural and situational contexts. Their study involves denotation and reference to the external world, and the techniques developed for the analysis of language-internal sense-relations seem inappropriate. The notion of determinate meaning existing in situationally and culturally decontextualized words and sentences has little to recommend it. As Dirven and Paprotté observed in the introduction to their collection of papers on metaphor (1985: ix):

Linguistic metaphor research has contributed to break down the divisional boundaries between semantics and pragmatics. Words obtain their meaning in co and context. The notion of fixed, schematic meanings, still treated as complexes of universal primitives, has lost its attractiveness and with it, explanations of metaphors in terms of feature transfer, verbal displacement and the like.

In an important critique of TGG's attempts to develop an inventory of semantic atoms for the description of decontextualized words, Bolinger (1965) has put forward a



number of insights which have lost little force thirty years later and which have a particular bearing on metaphor studies:

- a. That any such attempts will force theoreticians to exclude some important semantic insights and, as a consequence, their theory will fail to explain the behavior of native speakers.
- b. That metaphor poses a particular problem area for atomistic analysis: 'One can hardly avoid the conclusion of the indeterminacy in semantic interrelatedness' (p. 567).
- c. That the very activity of semantic atomization is based on the metaphor of grammar as a machine.

Whilst acknowledging that many semanticians live by machine and atomizing metaphors, I believe there are good reasons for my not doing this (see also Harris 1987). I note that the contributors to this volume vary in their use of a number of metalinguistic expressions, but this is the price one has to pay for the fact that linguistics is not (and cannot be in principle) a natural science concerned with the analysis of given objects.

Harris (2001) has provided important additional arguments against orthodox universalist approaches to metaphor. His integrational linguistics regards the notion that linguistic expressions can have a distinct semantic characterization as decontextualized units as untenable. Let us consider sentences such as:

humans and apes are related  
humans are not apes

Harris notes that the interpretation of such constructions depends on their accreditation. Uttered by a scientist they are different from when used as a remark about someone who has a craving for bananas or a report by a Jehovah's Witness on scientific biology or from a poem about human amorality. In other words, whether or not such statements appear literal or metaphorical depends on contextual factors. When there is no conflict among interlocutors about the accreditation of a statement (e.g. among two scientists of the same conviction) they are taken to be literal descriptions. Where such conflict arises (e.g. between a fundamentalist Christian and a scientist) the statements are taken metaphorically by one of the interlocutors. I have noted (Mühlhäusler 2003) that environmental advertising often employs metaphors as a strategy to reconcile moral and economic discourses such as when they advertise green goods 'that do not cost the earth'.

That metaphor "constitutes the indispensable principle for integrating diverse phenomena and perspectives" has been observed by researchers in neighboring disciplines as well (Berggren 1962: 237).

### 3. Metaphors and language endangerment

There are two questions I get frequently asked when speaking about the loss of the world's linguistic diversity:

1. Isn't the loss of languages a natural process and isn't it therefore silly to try to arrest it?
2. Why should one bother with linguistic diversity? Wouldn't the world be better off if everybody spoke the same language?

The premise of the first question can be easily dismissed. It is true that languages naturally come into being and disappear, but the rate at which they have disappeared from the mid-nineteenth century onward is far greater than the emergence of new languages and the loss of languages is accelerating. This is due to historical and human factors, not nature, as is emphasized in most of the contributions to this volume. It is not the case that humans have suddenly made a free choice to get rid of languages, as is sometimes claimed. On the contrary, speakers of small old-established/long established traditional languages have had no choice in this matter and when you ask the descendants of those who lost their languages, they overwhelmingly would like to have their languages back. This reflects a rational wish of having identity and roots, not irrational sentimentalism.

In spite of the wishes and aspirations of many speech communities, the process of language attrition continues unabated and the contributors to this volume make it abundantly clear that very little time indeed is left to document lesser-used languages, particularly aspects of their structure of lexicon which are brought into being by local conceptualizations and circumstances. Metaphor is a prime example of an endangered area of most traditional old-established languages. The following observations made by the authors in this volume are representative of what is happening on a global scale.

Awareness both among linguists and the wider public of the fact that many of the world's small languages are endangered or highly endangered is a recent phenomenon, with little or no debate before the 1980s. Even today, the full extent of this phenomenon is often not understood. Thus, in Australia there is a notion that some Aboriginal languages are still 'strong' – in the sense that they are passed on to the next generation and that there are significant number of speakers, an example being the Western Desert language, Yankunytjatjara. On closer inspection it turns out that what is passed on is the language names which tends to be applied to very different ways of speaking prevalent among younger speakers. This observation is also made in Montes de Oca Vega's contribution to the present volume on Nahuatl:

Although we can say that Nahuatl is the most vigorous and vital language in Mexico today, it is important to have in mind that many speech registers have suffered modifications or been lost to Spanish, the official language in Mexico, due to the effects of globalization which include educational, commercial and legal issues.

Importantly, what present-day younger speakers of Nahuatl talk about, their cultural knowledge and their semantics have changed considerably when compared to the discourses of the previous generation. Some linguists have continued to act as if the continuation of a name equals a continuity of identity over time. The assumption of identity of languages over time was prevalent even before the onset of colonization in spite of the fact languages are always dynamic, changing and adaptive. The notion of identity over time makes even less sense in the present when language change is far more rapid and mostly non-adaptive.

The options speakers of lesser-used old-established languages have are either to become modernized (equals becoming fully intertranslatable with modern European standard languages) or be left behind. Modern languages thus are little more than say English, Finnish or Dutch is with funny word forms and many of the world's minor and lesser-used languages are becoming similarly semantically colonized and turned into SAE languages. Importantly, whilst continuing to use words of their traditional languages, the metaphors many young speakers live by are those of the languages that dominate them. A third option, maintaining or reviving their traditional languages is one that requires a vast amount of commitment, resources and time and the number of successful reversals of language shift remains very low.

Linguists can help preserve linguistic diversity by careful documentation and they may be able to contribute to language maintenance and revival, though this requires a great deal of community effort. Linguists can be advocates for small languages and help create greater awareness. I have a personal agenda as I am a native speaker of an endangered language, Alemannic, myself and I would like to help my people preserve it. The metaphors of my language reflect the life of inhabitants of the Black Forest. To understand how people who grow up with this language and culture think, it is necessary to know their key metaphors.

#### 4. Arguments for linguistic diversity

The main arguments in support of linguistic diversity are a moral, a scientific and an economic one.

The moral reasons for sustaining linguistic diversity include a human right to speak one's own language, to be educated in one's language, or to have a name in one's own language. People need languages to express their personal and cultural identities, to have access to their cultural roots and connect to their traditional environment. Cultural and linguistic Human Rights are part of the UNESCO Declaration on Human Rights.

There are many scientific reasons for language diversity. For linguists the availability of reliable data is an important consideration. One of the functions of the contributions to this volume is to provide linguistic professionals with data that in turn may help achieve a better understanding of metaphor. But there are other scientific

reasons as well. Among them is the insight that languages develop as specialized tools for managing particular environments. Traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) is reflected in the lexical resources of the language including its metaphors. A desert language will have means for talking about survival in the desert, including words for different ways of finding water. Arctic languages will reflect very different cultural models and knowledge. It is noteworthy that one finds the greatest linguistic diversity in areas with complex small ecologies (such as in tropical rainforest areas), with each language being optimally suited to a particular ecology. The theme of the adaptation of languages to their natural environment is of central concern to the emerging sub-discipline of eco-linguistics (Mühlhäusler 2003).

No language is a neutral tool and no language interprets all aspects of the world better than another language. To gain fuller insights into phenomena one requires multiple perspectives, correctives from other languages. Some of the world's top scientists including Einstein and von Lorenz have seen the importance of such multiple perspectives as correctives for Western scientific language. Again, philosophers might ask different questions about the nature of 'being' if they approached this question from the perspective of a language that has a range of different words for different modes of existence. After all the being of a person is qualitatively different from the being of a chair or a rock.

The topic of the economic value of linguistic diversity has not featured in mainstream linguistic discourse and none of the authors in this volume ask how much the metaphors of the languages are worth. Some years ago Richard Damania from the Economics Department of University of Adelaide and I prepared a cost-benefit analysis of maintenance of Australian Aboriginal languages for DCITA (Dept. Communication, Information Technology and the Arts 2004). In this paper we demonstrated that the benefits by far outweigh the costs and that greater investment in language maintenance and revival could lead to even greater benefits. Restoring languages to communities not only reduces individual and social dysfunctionality and illness (thus saving dollars otherwise spent on prisons, hospitals and social workers), it can also lead to new economic activities such as linguistic and cultural tourism. The value of traditional ecological knowledge (e.g. plant names and knowledge of plant use, weather knowledge or fire management knowledge) runs into many billion dollars world wide and pilot projects such as an Australian project on Aboriginal weather knowledge has generated significant savings for agriculture and tourism.

A final argument for preserving linguistic diversity is the precautionary principle. Even if we do not fully understand what these languages are good for, we never will once they have disappeared. Extinction regrettably is forever.

One hopes that such arguments will be listened to. Unfortunately, there still is very little awareness among the world's leaders of the tragedy that is happening before their eyes, the potential loss of 80%+ of the world's languages within two generations.

The world's 6,000 or so human languages may differ little in linguistic complexity or their ability to express their thoughts of their speakers and there is no reason to

believe that English had qualities that pre-destined it to become a world language. French, Maori or Saami could have fulfilled this role equally well, had it not been for a series of historical accidents that catapulted English into its present leading role. What distinguishes languages are speaker numbers, economic and political power, status and many other things. Of the 6,000 languages known to linguists about 5,600 are spoken by 4% of the world's population the remaining 400 by 96% of the world's population. Only 10 languages have more than 100,000,000 speakers and this is on the transparency. Only 3 languages French, English and Russian have more than 100,000,000 additional non-native speakers. Counting languages and speaker numbers is a very hazardous business and it is difficult to get any agreement among linguists. A small number of languages are privileged not only in terms of speaker numbers but also in terms of the descriptions available for them. I sometimes get comments from my university's research body suggesting that I had spent enough time and money on the Norf'k language of the descendants of the Bounty mutineers. I have to remind them of the vast number of scholars that have worked on the description of English or Spanish over many years.

## 5. Documentation of metaphor

Metaphorical systems of traditional languages, particularly those without a tradition of literacy have not featured prominently in metaphor studies. Before the advent of internet search machines van Noppen's (1985) metaphor bibliography listed 4,300 plus titles. When I googled 'linguistic study of metaphor' I obtained 294,000 results. Whilst van Noppen's opus contains thousands of studies concerned with the metaphorical systems of a small number of Indo-European languages there is only a small trickle of studies of other languages, notably Japanese and Chinese and only a handful of studies for the Australian and Pacific region. Most of the studies of metaphor in the non-Indo-European languages address problems of poetical metaphor in traditional ceremonies rather than Lakoff and Johnson's question of the metaphorical arguments underlying everyday actions and argumentation.

That linguistic documentation is an urgent task, again has become widely accepted however as has been pointed out for instance by Evans (2010). Hansford in her paper on Chumburung numbers, points out another reason for the neglect of metaphor by documentary linguists:

[...] linguists tend to use elicitation, because they are after a particular feature. Only natural texts will readily provide metaphoric or figurative expressions. Also linguists often do not stay long enough in the area to encourage local people to use them in face-to-face conversations or for the linguist to explain what he or she is looking for. In addition linguists tend not to study a lot of anthropology, although symbolism such as the three-four dichotomy should crop up quite early in language learning.

My own work on Tok Pisin discourses draws on a large number of records of spontaneous conversations. They contain numerous metaphors as well as long stretches of a variety of Tok Pisin called 'Tok Pilai' or play language, which had never been documented before (Mühlhäusler 1985: 260 ff.)

Most 'documentation' of languages is far too narrowly focussed on 'core' grammar and lexicon and continues to ignore numerous other 'softer' or 'marginal' aspects of language. The cause of this of course is the dominant Western metaphor of reification which enables speakers of Western languages to convert embedded process of communication into objects. Speaking requires speakers, subject matter, purpose and numerous others – languages do not. Its object language is variably portrayed as a mental organ, a calculus, a system, a social semiotic and others. None of these definitions require attention to numerous environmental factors. The same metaphorical process lies at the bottom of notions such as communication, attitude, disagreement and numerous other abstract reified terms. The problems of the conduit metaphor of communication and the code metaphor of grammar have been discussed in detail by Reddy (1979). One is reminded of Whorf's statement (1956) that individual languages privilege only a limited interpretation of the world and that one needs other languages as a corrective.

One should certainly be careful not to assume that any single language provides privileged insights into every aspect of existence but, on the contrary assume that among languages there is a mix of metaphors representing the wisdom of a speech community and others that are problematic.

## 6. The work metaphors do

This leads me to another question: what work do the metaphors of others do? I have already alluded to the role of managing the natural and social environment. Another important function is that they enable contact with the spiritual world, e.g. surviving in dangerous places populated by forest spirits as is shown in Franklin's paper, or defining a relationship between people and God.

Metaphors can be characterized as bridges that lead from the known to the unknown. Another, perhaps more appropriate metaphor of metaphors is that they are like the beams of a searchlight that selectively highlights some aspects of the unknown but leaves other aspects in the dark. Thus when speakers of English describe the aftermath of an Australian bushfire, they say that everything is black whereas Aboriginal Australians say that the landscape is white. In actual fact, only the burnt trees and buildings are black, suggesting destruction and death. The ground is covered with white ash, which suggests fertility and regeneration (example given to me by Prof. Peter Sutton, South Australian Museum). The work that metaphors do in creating culture specific perspectives and actions can be illustrated with another example. Darwin's metaphor of the 'survival of the fittest' could become widely accepted in British English

and totally accredited as a literal description of certain evolutionary processes because it was grounded in social experience (business competition on a small over-populated island, social mobility and such like and in the discourse of sports and games). In Russia, by contrast, neither did Darwin's idea get accepted as an adequate metaphor, nor did the social context exist in which it could be taken literally true. Similarly the experience of difference and sameness in modes of being cannot be separated from its communicative context.

What is noticeable in the contributions to this volume is that the knowledge base of each of the language groups documented is very complex. What is common is that the languages documented have developed over a very long time amongst small groups of speakers and that they are important tools for the speakers in managing both the cultural and natural environment. One can characterize languages as the outcome of a particular prolonged process of accommodation to particular external circumstances.

It is important to ask what happens when speakers of particular languages find themselves in a radically new environment, such as when they are physically relocated. Most nomadic people have been made to live in settlements (a fact mentioned by several contributors to this volume), nuclear experiments for instance involved large-scale resettlement of people in the Pacific and Australia, suggesting destruction and death, or when they are missionized or colonized. In such situations the traditional knowledge base loses its power as a metaphorical basis for adapting to new circumstances.

A while ago I discussed with one of my research associates, Dr. Næssan, why many Australian Aboriginal people find it impossible to get on in a Western cash economy. After a long discussion, we concluded that this may be due to a metaphor meat food (*kuka*) is money. *Kuka* is scarce, desirable, obtained because of good luck, it goes off very quickly in a hot desert environment, and needs to be consumed quickly and shared around. This is how some of our Western Desert Aboriginal informants spend money: it is shared around and spent in a very short amount of time after which people are money *wiya* – broke. A metaphorical understanding of money equals pigs or live cattle has led to the institutionalized practice of converting the cash one earns into animals resulting overstocking and degradation of land in many parts of the world.

These of course are just anecdotal examples and much further research is required to confirm the claim that metaphorical systems in changed circumstances can often be highly dysfunctional.

## 7. How to identify metaphors

A while ago a colleague of mine organized a series of lectures titled 'Metaphors of God'. Whereas a talk on the metaphor 'the Lord is a loving shepherd' was accepted my own somewhat frivolous proposal to talk on the Reverend Spooner's metaphor 'the Lord is a shoving leopard' was not.

Frivolous as the example of the shoving leopard seems, it highlights a number of theoretical concerns I have. First, to understand why this metaphor came into being at all, one has to understand its linguistic history: in this case, the transposition of the initial consonants of two word phrases. But this transposition not only creates a new form, it also creates potential for a new meaning: it enables speakers to explore the implications of this expression, reflect on the nature of leopards and of God and to ask whether there might not be a religious system built around this notion. Such examples raise another question, which I will address once I have discussed a number of English expressions:

1. to rabbit	to chatter, waffle
2. old pot	an old man
3. club and stick/clodhopper	policeman
4. my love and kisses	my wife
5. raspberry	to make a rude noise with the lips
6. joy of life	wife
7. loaf	head
8. Up your date!	Up yours!
9. Honey-pot	vagina

A linguist from a non-English speaking background will be able to construct plausible explanations for the metaphorical or metonymical character of such expressions, classify and describe them. Thus, he or she may refer to the constant twitching of a rabbit's lips to explain its putative metaphorical meaning, to the round raspberry shape of one's lips when blowing a raspberry or to the similarity in shape of a date to an anus. However, such an account would miss a crucial property of the above expressions; they are all instances of rhyming slang, thus:

1. 'to rabbit' is short for 'rabbit and pork' = 'talk'
2. 'old pot' is short for 'pot and pan' = 'man'
3. 'club and stick' rhymes with 'dick', 'clod hopper' rhymes with 'copper' = 'police-man'
4. 'love and kisses' rhymes with 'missus'
5. 'raspberry' is short for 'raspberry tart' = 'fart'
6. 'joy of life' rhymes with 'wife'
7. 'loaf' is short for 'loaf of bread' = 'head'
8. 'date' is short for 'date and plum' = 'bum'
9. 'honey pot' rhymes with 'twat'

There are hundreds more such words in English. In as much as speakers are aware of the origin of an expression, such as 'to rabbit' or 'use your loaf' they are probably best not treated as metaphors, when the memory of their history is lost, they behave like other frozen metaphors.



Rhyming slang is just one example of a widespread phenomenon Laycock (1972) has referred to as 'ludling' from *ludus linguae*, 'linguistic game'. Laycock has documented ludlings in a number of New Guinea and other languages, and demonstrated that different language groups can play quite different language games. Ludlings are particularly common in secret and taboo registers of language, and, as Montes de Oca Vega shows in this volume "riddles can be considered a type of speech play". The outcome of a linguistic game such as a riddle can provide significant insights into conceptualizations and metaphor, but one has to beware that this is not necessarily so.

The general conclusion from all this, is that in order to understand language one cannot restrict oneself to synchronic analysis but needs to pay attention to the historical development that brought arbitrary endpoints into being. Treating the English examples above simply as instances of metonyms or metaphors would fail to characterize how this language works. The rhyming slang examples illustrate there are several ways that lead to the development of metaphors, that in some instances the target domain is the point of departure and that similarity of form rather than similarity of meaning is the primary factor. Thus, in the case of English rhyming slang there are certain target domains, (police, sexual partner, sexual organs, marginalized groups) that are often referred to not by their name but by an expression that rhymes with it (see Franklyn 1960 for a technical discussion of rhyming slang).

Metaphors can come into being through a number of processes and it would be interesting to find out not just by what metaphors others live by but also how they construct metaphors.

## 8. Conclusions

Using language metaphorically is an activity in which we engage in order to bridge the vast gaps between what we know and what we can know. The knowledge base of different cultures and subcultures varies greatly, and with it the boundary between what is literal and what is metaphorical. The contributors to this volume have demonstrated both the richness of metaphor systems and their fragility.

Time to document metaphors of others is running out, as the knowledge base of speakers of numerous small traditional languages is being eroded and as traditional metaphors are being replaced by those of a few large world languages. Language documentation has often excluded metaphor and linguists have not consistently had sufficient training to deal with them. The present volume affords insights into what can be done and what needs to be done. I hope this is just the beginning of a much larger cooperative research project into the "metaphors others live by".